

//

GOD AND OUR COUNTRY.

---

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ROXBURY,

ON

FAST DAY, APRIL 8, 1847.

---

By GEORGE PUTNAM,

MINISTER OF THAT CHURCH.

---

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.

*Second Edition.*

BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,

111 WASHINGTON STREET.

1847.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1847, by  
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Sept  
Samuel A. Green. M.D.

CAMBRIDGE:  
METCALF AND COMPANY.  
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

# DISCOURSE.

---

MATTHEW XXII. 21.

RENDER THEREFORE UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CÆSAR'S,  
AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S.

THESE are the words of Jesus. The Pharisees were trying to entangle him in a dilemma which they thought he could not escape. They ask him whether it is right or wrong for them, Jews, to pay tribute to the Roman emperor. The difficulty of the question lay here. The Jews had been conquered, and were held as a Roman province by force of arms. If he said, without qualification, that it was right to pay the tribute, and so acknowledged the rightful supremacy of the emperor, they knew he would expose himself to the indignation of the Jewish people, who held it as one of the most sacred ideas of their religious and civil polity, that no sovereign but God should be recognized, or a man of their own race, whom God should designate and anoint. On the other hand, if he said it was wrong to pay the tribute, they could go at once to the Roman magistrate and accuse him of seditious words, and so destroy him.

The snare was well laid. An ultraist would have been caught in it. But Jesus was no ultraist. They could not drive him into ultraism in matters connected with civil government, social order, and God's providence. He calls for a piece of coin, gets the concession of his questioners that it bore Cæsar's image and superscription, and then gives the answer of the text, in which he recognizes the authority and claims of the emperor, in such a manner that he could not be accused of being other than a peaceable subject, and yet with such restrictions in behalf of the divine law that he could not be charged with giving up the principles of piety and morality.

Similar questions arise, in different shapes, in our own day. It is evident that there is in the public mind among us a great deal of perplexity, — confused and contradictory thinking, — on such questions as these: — How far do wrong and corrupt acts on the part of a nation, or of the government, as its organ, modify the allegiance due to it from an individual? May we as Christians properly recognize and support a form of government, or a national compact, when that government or compact adopts courses and recognizes and maintains institutions which are in themselves at variance with the spirit and precepts of the Master, Christ, and the divine law of love and justice? What shall we do, when the great national compact commits us either to an active part or a passive acquiescence in one course of proceeding or condition of things,

and our Christian profession, and our ideas of absolute right and holiness, seem to commit us to an opposite course? Questions like these are anxiously pondered and warmly discussed among us. They are in process of solution, and on the manner in which they shall be solved depends the future moral and civil destiny of the land. These questions, and others akin to them, are the great social and public questions of our time in this country; and therefore they are questions very suitable for consideration on such an occasion as this. Indeed, they require a great deal of consideration, public and private, for they are not of a nature to be well settled in the off-hand manner in which many persons undertake to settle them.

There is a widely active disposition in our community, at the present time, to apply moral tests to national measures and institutions, and to examine them in the light of the Christian religion. Many are anxiously inquiring how far the public policy and social state of the country conform to the divine law, as taught by Jesus Christ. It is a noble inquiry. We have reason to rejoice that it is going on. Great good must eventually result from it. But, so far as it is to affect the opinions and actions of our citizens in their social and civil relations, it needs to be pursued with wisdom and caution.

Of course, it is found, on applying the strict test of the gospel to national proceedings and institutions, that they will not bear that test at all points. At

many points there will be shortcomings, and at some points a flagrant violation of that perfect law. There is no nation on earth, nor has there ever been one, that will bear that test. Our own will not bear it. And in view of this lamentable fact, what shall we say and do? What ground shall we take? There are two *ultra* methods of settling this last question, — two forms of ultraism upon the subject. One is that which excludes moral tests and Christian considerations entirely from a man's view of public and national affairs. This is the doctrine that leads men to put forth and repeat, in word or deed, such infamous maxims as these: — “All is fair in politics”; “Take any advantage you can get over other nations”; “Do your worst in war, and cheat your best in diplomacy.” The highest and most respectable form which this doctrine takes is that which has become so familiar in our ears, — this, namely, “Our country, right or wrong.”

I will not discuss this doctrine. It is out of the pale of Christian reasoning. Those who hold it are not open to Christian considerations. If they profess Christianity as private men, or even the moral law as generally understood, — if they profess it, their profession is either affectation or self-deceit. But there are but few men that do openly hold this ultra doctrine, however they may often act in accordance with it. Every public measure or institution is defended by those interested in its support, either as just

and good in itself, or as an unavoidable evil. This kind of ultraism is not roundly professed by many, although it is extensively practised upon in particular cases, and produces a vast amount of public corruption and iniquity. It prevails just to the degree in which the public mind is depraved ; it recedes just in proportion to the growth of true religion and morality in the land.

The other and opposite kind of ultraism is that which expresses itself in such language as this : — “No union with slaveholders” ; “We will not be parties to a constitutional compact which recognizes and sustains a great iniquity” ; “The country which wages an unnecessary or unjust war (and many will say that all wars are unjust and unnecessary), that is not *our* country. We are Christians, and will not own it. Let us separate. Let us dissolve the Union. Let us form a new and smaller one, or else live in righteousness and peace without one.”

Such language as this is rather familiar to our ears. And this form of ultraism is entitled to a respectful consideration, because it is adopted by many persons who wish to act conscientiously, and to obey God truly. They do not consider it ultraism, but only a direct following out of the most plain and simple precepts of the gospel, and the best established laws of morality.

Let us examine this doctrine candidly, and not shrink from examining it in its application to those

wrongs with which it charges this country at the present time.

The doctrine here stated is revolutionary. By many it is openly and honestly held as such, and is always obviously such in its tendency. Well, there is such a thing, certainly, as a right of revolution. The only question is, What circumstances will justify the exercise of that right? There are very grave considerations that should enter into the solution of this question.

In the first place, it is to be considered that God ordains civil society. He puts men together, and has so constituted them that they must live in societies. He ordains nations. National compacts or societies are not arbitrary and artificial. They grow up necessarily. Their form and extent are determined in each case by a great variety of circumstances, events, and affinities, over which a high Providence presides, educating social combinations and national polities which no man or set of men has foreseen or planned, or could prevent, though men have been the instruments which that Providence uses in bringing about those results. No man can survey the face of the earth, and the pages of the world's history in all the past ages, and consider the origin and progress of the nations, without feeling that they are of divine appointment, — that a stupendous Providence has superintended their existence and career, and has used both the virtues of good men and the crimes of bad



men in working out its results. And then such societies, nations, if they must exist, must have governments,—that is, such customs, laws, institutions, and terms of union, as grow up out of the origin, circumstances, and character of the particular nation. So that government itself, inasmuch as it is an essential element of national society, which is a divine institution,—government must itself be regarded as a divine institution. It is neither cant nor mere rhetoric, that saying of St. Paul's, — “The powers that be are ordained of God.” Then, further, a society constituted as a nation necessarily is must include all sorts of men, and of course many that are deficient in sound knowledge and moral principle. And, of necessity, the latter sort of persons will have an influence, more or less, according to numbers and other circumstances, in producing bad or imperfect customs, laws, and institutions, vitiating more or less the public acts and relations of the body politic. Then the question arises, Are the moral, Christian members of the society morally implicated in the evil thus produced and done? No, certainly, provided they employ such action and influence as the institutions of the country enable them to use, to prevent the evil. They are not implicated. How am I implicated, supposing that I am a thorough Christian, and have always advocated and voted for good measures,—how am I implicated in the evil that exists or is done in the nation as such? I did not or-

dain the nation to be, but God ordained it in his high providence. I did not have the forming of its ideas, usages, institutions, character. I did not become a member of the nation from my own choice. I was born into it, put into it by the Creator. I cannot help, therefore, being associated with some bad men in the national society, and so witnessing, perhaps suffering from, some bad institutions and measures. I cannot escape from this relationship. God holds me to it; for no call of duty requires me to expatriate myself; and if I did, I must adopt some other country, where I should find social evil also, either in the same or a different shape. I am not implicated. Society must exist, and my nature and the laws of God require me to be a member of society. There are bad members in it, and I cannot help it. Social evils exist and will arise, and I cannot help it. I can neither disown society, nor can I make it perfect. I am not implicated in its unchristian acts and institutions.

It seems to me there is a great deal of mistaken and morbid moralizing on this matter of being responsible for the institutions and acts of the country which we belong to. We are responsible only for those which we approve individually, and vote to establish or perpetuate. Those who speak with so much assurance of breaking up the social compact would do well to consider a little more profoundly the origin, the necessity, the providential character of civil society, and of each individual's position in it.

In the second place, when any thing like a revolution is contemplated, — a dissolution of a national compact, — before it is attempted or advocated, several grave inquiries ought to be instituted. It ought to be considered whether the moral evils which belong to or spring from the existing national organization are really intolerable or enormous, relatively to the general condition of civilized and nominally Christian nations; and whether those evils are greater than might be expected to result from the moral imperfections of the people as individuals, taking into view all the untoward circumstances in which the present generation finds itself placed, and the usages and ideas handed down from its predecessors. It is also to be considered whether those evils are likely to be removed, and for the future prevented, by a subversion of the national organization, — and if that is likely, then, whether there is good ground of assurance that the fact and process of a political and social disruption, in connection with the bad elements of character previously extant among the people, are not likely to produce other and equivalent or greater evils. There are periods in the history of a nation when all these questions may be answered in the affirmative, and then revolution is justifiable; but never otherwise. We have no moral right to do or say any thing to induce disunion and revolution, *upon moral and Christian grounds*, until we are deliberately and dispassionately convinced

that the public sins and social evils under the present organization are greater than might be expected from the character of the people, and that a better average state of society for the whole country might and would be created out of the same materials, the same men, the same ideas and customs, the same amount of Christian principle and mental light. For we can have no materials more or better than these out of which to form a new society, and these, however bad, will all remain to be disposed of as much after as before the dissolution. We have no moral right, in a fit of spleen or disgust, mortification or anger, or any unfounded and presumptuous idea of responsibility, — we have no right, on such grounds and in such a state of mind, to say a word or take a step to shake the pillars of the time-hallowed fabric of society which Providence has erected around us and placed us in, and by which and in which he gives such an unbounded sphere for outward welfare, for enjoyment, and for personal duty and holiness. The plea of humanity cannot sanctify a rash trifling with things so sacred as the providential bonds that hold society together, in such a degree of peace and amity as the human lot admits of.

There is such a thing as the right of revolution; and there are occasions, in the progress of human affairs, in which it may be righteously exercised; but he who lightly provokes or anticipates the occasion neither obeys Christ nor serves his race, — is false both to Cæsar and to God.

In this connection I must refer to two circumstances which tend at the present time to disaffect the minds of many towards our national compact, and which give rise to many feelings, many words, and some acts, which, as far as they go, go to weaken the bonds of union, and to hasten the time when they will be severed. These are, first, the existing war with Mexico, and, second, the institution of slavery generally.

First, *the war*. There are those, and they are many, amongst us, who hold that war in these days is always an unnecessary evil, and an impolitic as well as unchristian measure; and, therefore, a country that under any circumstances wages a war becomes less dear to them, and they are more willing, perhaps eager, to dismember it and dissolve its civil bands. There is not time to discuss this general question now, of the non-necessity and unjustifiableness of all wars.

But this war in particular is much more numerously held to have been unnecessarily and wrongly induced on the part of this nation. It is held that we are the aggressors, and that even if the war be not unjust towards Mexico, — if she deserved chastisement, and can claim no sympathy, — still that the expense, sufferings, sorrows, and sins in which it involves our own country might have been avoided without loss of honor, or of any substantial rights or advantages. This is certainly the opinion of multi-

tudes. Let me say it is my own opinion ; though I will by no means violate the proprieties of my position by denying the intelligence or the sincerity of those who profess a different opinion. The question, unfortunately, has something of a party character among us, and therefore I will not pursue it, — only to remark, that in Europe, out of the range of our party biases, the universal voice, so far as I have been able to gather it from the foreign press, declares us to be the aggressors, and regards us as provoking the war unnecessarily, at least, if not unjustly.

Without going into the inquiry now, let us concede, for the purposes of the present discussion, that the war was unnecessary, at best, and therefore wrong ; criminal in itself, however innocent and honest may have been the intent of those who first originated or subsequently sanctioned and sustained it. Admitting this, what then ? what shall a Christian citizen say or do about it ? and how should it affect his mind towards his country's institutions of government and union ? He should say and do nothing, I think, that may tend to weaken in himself or others the strong and fitting allegiance and attachment to those institutions as the appointment of Providence, and as fraught with as many present blessings, and with as good hopes for the future, as have ever been allotted to the nations of the earth. There is nothing in the fact of this war that will justify any feeling of disloyalty to the country, or any desire of its civil dissolution.

It is sad and painful, indeed, to the Christian, to be reminded, as he is by this war, that the law and spirit of the gospel are not yet universal and paramount in this country or in any other; that the spirit of love has not yet superseded every other spirit; that there are still active in human nature elements that tend to violence, and ambitions, energies, and impulses that sometimes impel to wrong, and do not always shrink even from blood and destruction. It is sad, I say, to the Christian to be reminded of this. But what then? Did he not know it all before? Did he not know that the perfect kingdom of God had not come upon earth? Did he not know that the passions which lead to war are still rife and visibly active all through the land and through the world? Did he not know that Christianity is even now nowhere any thing but a leaven in society, and that its spirit of gentleness, justice, and love is still only one element in a vast mass of influences that sway mankind? Did he not know that the gospel has never yet anywhere done any thing more than *mitigate* the passions that lead to war, — not extinguished them, or brought them into any thing like complete subjection to its own mild spirit? Where has he lived, and what have been his associations, if he did not know these lamentable truths, before as much as since the Mexican war began?

This nation had been exempt from the scourge of foreign war for a period of thirty years, — a long period

of exemption, the student of history knows. The other leading nations of Christendom have also been to an unusual degree exempt from war during the same period. This protracted time of general peace has been owing in part to the exhaustion induced by the long and severe wars in Europe, in the period just preceding; in part, also, to the extension and multiplication of commercial ties; in part, likewise, to the increased expensiveness of war, and the financial obstacles to it; and in part, no doubt, to the diffusion of more Christian light, and higher moral ideas upon the subject. These causes, working together, have given us a long exemption from war, and we might well have hoped that such a combination of favorable influences might have saved us longer from the evil.

But how could any man, with the common faculty of observation, have worked himself into the happy delusion of supposing that purely moral and Christian influences had become so predominant, here or elsewhere, as to give any promise of perpetual immunity?

Only look abroad, and see what elements of the war-flame there are everywhere. Is there not still injustice, and aggression, and retaliation, between man and man, in every day's transactions? Is there not the grasping, domineering, crowding spirit manifest all around? Is there not hot temper and malignant passion shown in the thousandfold collisions of private life? Indeed there is. And what are these



but the elements of war? There is discord often even within the sacred precincts of home, — quarrels between the nearest kin. Every neighbourhood has its little feud, — little, but bitter. The quietest village of Puritan New England is not safe from incendi- arism, riot, and bloodshed. Religious discussion is not free from acerbity and ungentle exclusiveness. Even philanthropy itself distils not a little of the ven- om of hatred and uncharitableness.

If these things are so, is it strange that there should be war sometimes? Can we expect that the elements of war will be always fermenting thus among our- selves, and that they never will break over our bor- ders, and breed a quarrel with a national neighbour? Can there be violence, and bad temper, and unprinci- pled aggression, all through society, and will it never come to a head, and be a national sin, and break out upon another nation? Shall we expect that raging fires can be pent up in the bowels of the earth, and never find a volcanic vent, — or that the electric flame can pervade the atmosphere, and never send a de- stroying bolt upon the earth? Verily this war is not to be wondered at! Nor does it afford any new or special reason for disgust or discontent with our national compact. It simply illustrates, what was plain before, that the people of this country have not reached that height of Christian morality which will preclude wars.

Some persons are more disposed than before to

break up a national union which has the disposition and the power to involve us in such a war and to commit us to the responsibility of it. I have said enough on this matter of individual responsibility, and need not make an application of the subject to this point. But you say, you cannot share the responsibility of such iniquity as your country is practising through war. What will you do, then? You will seek a better place to live. Go, then, to England, and share the responsibility of the opium war in China, and the war of endless aggrandizement in Afghanistan. Or to France, and chant the national anthem of glorification for Tahitan usurpation, Algerine conquest, and Arab extermination. Or go to Russia, and follow the Czar to the plains of Poland, or the mountain retreats of the brave Circassians. Or go to Spain, and enlist for life in a ruthless war of factions. Or, if this will not better your condition, or lighten your responsibility, then go to Italy, where there is unequalled moral degradation, but where there is not enough of union, nationality, and patriotism to rally the crushed and priest-ridden populace to a brave assertion of their rights against the mitre of Rome and the bayonets of Austria. If you renounce your country on account of its wicked war, go try one of these other countries. Or perhaps you will say, "No, let us stay where we are, but let us break up this ill-adjusted union; let the remoter fragments take care of themselves, and we will have a smaller Northern empire by ourselves."

But what good will that proceeding do? Will it infuse any more Christianity into the hearts of the whole people? Or are the people of the North so loving, so just, so gentle, so Christian, that they can never go to war? Or shall we expect, that when this great nation is broken up into several small contiguous nations, there will be perpetual peace among them? If the several portions do not like one another well enough to preserve the time-hallowed bonds that now unite them, will they all be loving and peaceful towards one another, when they have become rival states, with every unkind feeling exasperated by the harsh process of the breaking up? And will the perpetual border collisions and animosities that must ensue, ripening often, if not constantly, into downright wars, — will these be an agreeable or a Christian substitute for this one single, distant, and probably brief, Mexican war? Let a man answer these questions, before he advocates national dissolution *on moral grounds*, or allows himself to part with all attachments to the institutions of his fathers.

I trust I shall not be misunderstood with respect to the present war. Those who have listened to me here on other occasions must be well aware that I do not regard it with any undue leniency. If it suited our present subject to draw its moral characteristics, I trust appropriate colors would not be wanting to the pencil. But bad and mournful as the war is, and painful as are the revelations it makes concerning the

human heart, it is no cause of revolutionary thoughts or wishes. It ought not to diminish our love of our country, or our confidence in it as compared with any other country that exists, or any that we could make out of some fragments of the dissevered union. Notwithstanding the bad aspects of this war, there is not a nation on earth that gives better promise of peace for coming years, and all the blessings of peace, than this country, as at present constituted and united. Nor could we carve one out that would give better promise. We must have a country somewhere, and of some sort. God has given us one to love and to cherish, and as good a one as the lot of humanity has hitherto admitted of, or has any speedy prospect of. Let us, — I will say, not only in the name of patriotism, but in the name of Christianity, — let us love, and cherish, and maintain it. And we may be assured, that if we have a reasonable mind, and a kind spirit, and a due deference to Providence, we shall find no incompatibility in rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

There are many other things that I desired to say concerning this war, considered as a sin, and the fruit of sin, as a calamity, and the mother of calamities, and yet as a retribution which Providence will use for some ultimate good, and which the God who ever causeth the wrath of man to praise him will make a fountain from which some wise lessons and true blessings will be made eventually to flow. But time is wanting.

We were to consider the subject of *Slavery* in this connection. It is a subject that has obtained more consideration amongst us of late than any other of a general and public nature.

Slavery covers a large portion of our country. It began far back in the iniquities of the African slave-trade, and its continuance involves many wrongs and great misfortunes. What ought a Christian to do and think about it?

In the first place, let the Christian citizen not overlook the bad moral character of the institution, or become indifferent to its many evils, nor let him do any thing, by action or neglect, to promote its extension or continuance.

In the second place, let him preserve his reason, his equanimity, his temper, and learn to look calmly upon an institution which Providence has permitted to exist almost ever since the first formation of civil society, and which the same Providence seems likely to suffer to exist for some time longer. That is no reason why we should not use all fair and legitimate influence to shorten its days; but it is a reason why we should not suffer ourselves to be excited and angry, or to hate those portions of the country on which, by their fault or their misfortune, this evil presses, or why we should wish to be separated from them.

I cannot see any thing but rashness, thoughtlessness, and bad temper in the cry that is so common,—"No union with slaveholders." Suppose we should

separate, and break up our country; will that abolish slavery? Why, they at the South talk quite as loudly about dissolving the union for the purpose of perpetuating slavery. No union with slaveholders? And why not? Because they are sinners, you must say; for we are now considering only the position of those who desire dissolution on moral grounds. No union with sinners! What shall we do? We cannot, then, have a Northern union of States, for there are sinners here of all sorts; and, among other sorts of sin, there is a great deal of sympathy with slaveholding, and a readiness to help the South in perpetuating and extending it. There has never been a public measure adopted in favor of slavery, without the aid of Northern votes. No union with sinners? Why, then we must dissolve all compacts, — that of the commonwealth, the county, the city; we cannot trade with men, or do any business with them, for many of them are great sinners, and all of them more or less. We must dissolve our families, for there is sin there. The Christian must break all bonds and stand literally alone; nay, according to that principle, — no union with sin, — almost every man would have to tear soul and body apart, for one or the other of them he will find stained with some sin. The only sense in which we can say, without absurdity, that we will have no union with slaveholders, or with any other class of sinners at the North or the South, is this, — that we will not take any part in their sin, nor encourage, nor countenance it. And

this the Christian may and should always say. But union with sinners must continue in many ways as long as human society endures, that is, as long as man is man. It is a false and foolish plea, that we must dissolve the union on Christian grounds, to avoid the responsibility of being identified in any way with sinners. On the contrary, it is our Christian duty to maintain the closest possible union with sinners, to pity them, to instruct them, to treat them as brethren, and aid them, whenever they will permit it, to recover from their sin. Withdraw from union with sinners? The idea is at once foolish, selfish, unchristian, and, what is more to the purpose, utterly impracticable. There is neither patriotism, nor humanity, nor religion in proposing it.

It would be a glorious thing, if our Southern States could find it practicable, and come to the determination, to put an end to slavery on moral grounds, simply for the sake of Christian justice. But we must not be surprised or angry if they do not, nor think them worse than mankind in general; for never yet did any nation, Christian or heathen, perform such a stupendous act of social revolution, on mere moral grounds. It would not be done in Massachusetts at this moment, on merely and strictly moral grounds, if the institution existed here in full vigor. It is the sort of sacrifice that no community ever makes on moral grounds alone. It is a pity that it is so, but so it is the world over. Let us spare our

vituperations. Let us not expect miracles too confidently, or any very sudden and extraordinary manifestation of Christian principle, on the part of a whole country, and at great sacrifices, — for we shall not witness it either at the South or at the North.

In the mean time, the institution of slavery is growing weaker in this country, and will decline, — partly because higher moral ideas on the subject than prevailed in former ages are getting abroad, and more especially because the eternal laws of God's providence are working against it. Slave states cannot prosper; after they are fairly settled, and their first crops gathered, they all decline relatively to free states. They cannot be rich, nor populous, nor strong. They grow relatively weak. By multiplying the number of states, they may acquire an artificial preponderance of political power, — a bloated semblance of strength; yet by the laws of God they decline, and that on account of the bad working of that bad institution. And they must continue to decline, even though they should go on to plant slave colonies from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. They will lose strength on one side faster than they can gain it on the other. I say this in no taunting spirit, and in no spirit of exultation over my countrymen, and my brethren, and fellow-sinners at the South. But it is God's law, — it must be, — and no doubt it had better be. \*

---

\* "An inspection of the map of the United States displays the unri-



It is the right of the Free States, and I wish it were more extensively felt to be their sacred duty, to oppose by their votes, and all legitimate influences, the creation of any new Slave States, especially out of any territory, Mexican or American, that is now free.

Had I a voice in the public councils, I would say to the advocates of slave extension, — if they would not listen to any moral plea, I would take ground more intelligible to them, — I would say to them, “We will not consent to bring new States into being, with that curse planted upon them by our act, and before they have a people to speak for themselves, —

valled natural advantages of Virginia. The ocean embraces it in wide bays and noble rivers. The air of heaven flows over it in most balmy and salubrious breezes. Alluvial meadows, swelling uplands, green and lovely intervals, romantic and noble mountains, diversify its surface, which extends beyond the summit ridge of the Atlantic States, and admits it to a participation of the benefits of the valley of the great West, whose rivers fertilize its interior boundary. In extent of territory, in natural productiveness, in the intellectual energies of its freeholders, and in its ancestral treasures of wisdom and patriotism, the Old Dominion has no superior in this confederacy. Under the census of 1820, the ratio of representation in Congress was fixed at 40,000, population being computed according to the provisions of the Constitution, and Virginia was entitled to 22 members. By the same apportionment, the State of New York was entitled to 34 members. Under the census of 1840, the ratio of representation was fixed at 70,680. New York retains the same number as under the census of 1820, namely, 34, while Virginia has gone down to 15! a loss of nearly one third of her political power in 20 years! How long will it be before her patriotic and enlightened statesmen will return to their senses on this subject, and, following the counsels of Jefferson, bravely meet the question on its merits, and revive the wasting energies of their people and their soil?

“It is now twenty-five years since the American confederacy was convulsed to its centre, and the government threatened with dissolution, on

that curse which must blight their future career. Look at your own impoverished, half-depopulated, slovenly cultivated States. Compare Kentucky with Ohio, or Virginia with New York, in all that constitutes the prosperity of states. Review the sayings and writings of your own sages and statesmen in the old time, who pronounced this institution to be founded in flagrant wrong, and fraught with unmitigated calamity. Look at all the distinct and fearful commentaries on this institution, to be found within your own borders; and then do not wonder that we refuse,—simply as men, citizens, patriots,—refuse to bring new communities into being, blighted by our act from their birth, and by our hands saddled with ruin from their

---

the admission of the territory of Missouri to the Union. The party in Congress, resolved upon allowing the institution of slavery to exist in that State, finally prevailed. Looking at the progress and condition of Ohio, and the other States which have grown up under the celebrated Ordinance of 1787, and considering the natural resources and advantages of Missouri, it can scarcely be doubted, that, if it had been consecrated to free labor, it would, before this, have overflowed in prosperity, and other States have been seen advancing into the circle of the Union beyond its remotest borders. Now what are the facts? In his recent annual message, the governor of that State, in all the deliberateness and solemnity of an official announcement, declares,—‘ With our rich soil and genial climate, we are not a prosperous and thriving people ’; and plainly, with faithful boldness, accounts for the failure. ‘ We depend,’ says he, ‘ on physical labor, and reject the superior advantages of mental labor. We depend on brute force, and reject the superior advantages of skill and science.’

“ With such demonstrations, — and they might easily be indefinitely multiplied, — will it be possible for our countrymen, in any section of the Union, much longer to keep themselves blind to the law of Providence, thus announcing itself, like the handwriting of God on the walls of Belshazzar’s palace, in letters of light and of fire? ” — *Upham’s Oration before the New England Society in the City of New York*, pp 33, 34

cradles. As political fathers and guardians of new States, we will not blast our offspring with the seeds of incurable disease, and a slow but certain death. For the fault will be more ours who begin the mischief than theirs who, in after generations, will have to bear it because they will not know how to help themselves. We give our solemn, united, and unalterable 'No!' to every act that would involve us in this guilt."

O, it is greatly to be desired that on this momentous question the North and the West should be true to themselves; and that with no selfish and sectional spirit, but so true to themselves as to be true to the whole country, true to future generations, — and for some it may not be in vain to add, true to the behests of justice, humanity, and religion.

Whatever be the course of events on this and kindred subjects, I see no occasion for passionate excitement. Let us use our influence for the right, — use it soberly, in good-nature, unprovoked, without threats and without alarm; and in the mean time, let God's providence work on, and work out its great designs, as it surely will, in its own good time.

We cannot but deplore the moral evils of all sorts that fester in the hearts of the people, and get embodied in institutions, and sometimes break out into war. We will deplore them, and do what we may in our little spheres to cure them, or lessen their growth. But still be calm. They are nothing new. They have

not arisen in a day, and will not be cured in a day. They are not more or greater than they have always been among men, but rather less. We must learn, not to be idle, not to be indifferent, not to assist and countenance wrong, but to be patient with it. God is patient. He is long-suffering. He takes a great deal of time for the removal of evil, and the accomplishment of his plans. We cannot hurry him, we cannot take the work out of his hand. We can only coöperate with him, and wait his time.

Christianity is not *enthroned* among the nations, and it will not be in our day. We cannot establish the perfect law of love in our time, but we can best do our little towards it by seeing to our own hearts and lives, and manifesting the spirit of love in all our dealings with our fellow-men, and all our acts as neighbours, as members of a community, as the companions of the imperfect and sinful, and as citizens of an imperfect, yet favored country. Let us not childishly, petulantly, grow angry and impatient, and clamor for national dismemberment, when things go wrong, as they often will in this world, — but have faith in God, and brotherly kindness towards our fellow-men, and possess our souls in patience. If the holy God can have patience with his froward children, how much more should we, who share their imperfection and perverseness, and are in our various ways, it is likely, as bad as the rest!

Who are we, sinners every one, who cannot live

in the nearest relations of life without sin, nor even plead for righteousness and Christian love without losing often the very spirit that we desire to spread, — who are we, to say to any class of our fellow-citizens, or any portion of our country, “Stand aside; let there be no fellowship between us, for we are holier than ye”? The love of man and the love of country are not incompatible. They are ever most likely to be found together. Patriotism and religion are not antagonist sentiments. The law of love and right, revealed in the word of God, is not at variance with the providence of the same God, which has ordained the ties of nations and the love of country.

He who will may find a way to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s, and so be true alike and at once to the claims of heaven and the relations of earth.